

**ANALYSIS OF THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEVEL AND ATTITUDE  
IN THE ASPECT OF STARTING-UP AND RUNNING MICRO-ENTERPRISES  
AMONG STUDENTS OF LUBLIN UNIVERSITIES OF MAJORS IN ECONOMICS,  
MANAGEMENT, AND FINANCE**

---

Dawid Lahutta, M.Sc.

*Lublin University of Technology  
Faculty of Management  
Department of Finance and Accounting  
Nadbystrzycka 38, 20-618 Lublin, Poland  
e-mail: d.lahutta@pollub.pl*

**Received 11 November 2017, Accepted 25 March 2018**

---

**Abstract**

Entrepreneurship has been a functioning term in academic literature for a long time, however, the research and discussions concerning its importance among the youth take more place in modern science. In economics, this term denotes a tendency to take new risks or seek and realize unconventional projects. The direct approach is to start and run one's own business. A one-person business activity is the dominant form of an idea realization about the entrepreneurship on a small range. From the moment the annex I to an ordinance 364/2004 came to life, the micro-enterprise stands out as the most common when it comes to the size of one-person business activities. The article concentrates on the measurement and analysis of the level of businesses among students of Lublin universities, related mainly to the desire and initiative of starting-up and running one's own business. The aim of the article is to increase the level of perception of the knowledge about the youth's entrepreneurial attitude, especially those possessing extended economic and financial knowledge. The research was possible thanks to a survey covering the representative sample of the population of students of economics, management, and finance at Lublin universities. The choice of this sample was random and focused on different majors. The results and conclusions were collected according to the majors, age, gender, and previous experience of the responders.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial attitude, entrepreneurship among students, academic entrepreneurship, running micro-enterprises, survey research

**JEL classification:** L26, M13

## Introduction

The current economic realities impose having high knowledge, experience, and other necessary competences allowing for effective functioning within the economic space. Quite a lot of young people are forced to enter the job market early, only to remain competitive in relation to others who search for a job (Pasternak-Malicka, 2014). The general tendencies concerning this occurrence show that young people nowadays enter the job market earlier than a few years ago (Rękas, 2015). Together with the economic development, the perception of the youth on the job market changes. In Poland, it is the employer market, meaning that the employers can afford to pick their workers and impose high requirements at the beginning of the recruitment stage. This situation exerts pressure on students to gain experience during studies, just to be able to have job experience as a graduate. Gradually, more people do not see themselves as full-time employees, because they want to decide about their career and the type of business they want to run. Therefore, more people want to run one's own business, some want to do it during studying at university, combining learning with running a business (Amway Global Entrepreneurship Report, 2016).

Entrepreneurship is a wide and difficult to define term. Over the years, in economics, the theory of entrepreneurship was being changed. As for precursors, they are believed to be R. Cantillon, A. Smith, and J.B. Say (Potocki, 2000). Table 1 presents researchers in the field of theory of economic definitions of entrepreneurship in order to show the differences in approaches throughout years.

Table 1. Entrepreneurship definition over the years

Author	Definition
1	2
R. Cantillon (1730)	The activity based on „grasping” the opportunity and taking risk
A. Smith (1776)	The activity of a person who has a great prudence in thrifting and using saved resources to specific ventures
J. B. Say (ok. 1800)	The behavior of the entrepreneur which transfers resources from the less efficient area to the more efficient one, gaining profit
T. Veblen (1904)	Aggressive competition and instrumental treatment of knowledge (opportunism)
F.H. Knight (1921)	Gains in return for incurring uncertainty and risk
J.E. Schumpeter (1934)	Introducing new combinations of company organization – new products, services, sources of raw materials, production methods, markets, and new forms of organization
B.F. Hoselitz (1952)	Incorporating uncertainty, coordinating production resources, introducing innovation, and delivering capital
A.H. Cole (1959)	Intentional activity aimed at establishing and developing a profit-oriented company
D.C. McClelland (1961)	Remarkable ability to take risk

1	2
M. Casson (1982)	Decisions and assessments concerning coordination of rare 'volatile' resources
I. Kirzner (1984)	Adaptation to the needs of the environment (in the short term). Discovering new opportunities (in the long term)
W. Gartner (1985)	Creating new organisations
H.I. Grousbeck, M.J. Roberts, H.H. Stevenson (1989)	Chasing the opportunity without taking the constraints created by the currently controlled resources into account
P.F. Drucker 1985	Searching for changes, answering, and exploiting them

Source: author's own elaboration based on Piccuch (2013).

For the purpose of the article, entrepreneurship will be considered as a merger of R. Cantillon's (1730), F.H. Knight's (1921), A.H. Cole's (1959), and D.C McClelland's (1961) definitions. Therefore, entrepreneurship will be understood as an intentional activity directed at starting-up and running a company, based on searching for opportunities and taking risk in return for profit.

The phenomenon on which this article focuses is the academic entrepreneurship. It is understood in two ways. The most common is the involvement of scientific institutions, researchers, support workers, administration employees, PhD candidates, and students in business. Such engagement of academic people is the effect of the inclusion of universities into the set of key institutions to develop an entrepreneurial attitude in society. Then, it is essential to distinguish between the most common approach and a traditional one – creating spin-outs and spin-offs (Weiss, 2015).

This article concentrates mostly on the entrepreneurial attitude and the entrepreneurial level among students of main economic majors – economics, management and finance, and accounting studies, who are assumed to show more entrepreneurial attitudes because of the knowledge they gain during studying, which allows for the measurement of the entrepreneurship level among the people who should have basic knowledge about the market mechanisms and be able to find themselves in nowadays' economic realities.

The aim of the article is to examine the way in which the students of Lublin universities present themselves against the background of the current trends in terms of the entrepreneurial attitude and the level of entrepreneurship. The method of the research was an opinion poll, whereas the tool allowing for the realization of the goal was a survey conducted among young students, investigating their perception of entrepreneurship and the evaluation of their own skills in terms of starting-up and running one's own business.

## 1. Methodology and research tools

The methodology used to realize the goal was the survey. In the research, two forms of tools were used – Paper & Pen Personal Interviews (PAPI ) and Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI). PAPI is a method of gathering information in quantitative research through direct questionnaire, while CAWI respondents were asked to fill it via the Internet. Initially, the survey in the paper form was conducted at universities during classes, however, later, it was accessible via the Internet on a dedicated platform (Krok, 2015). The research was extended by the CAWI method because the researched group consisted mostly of students, who are young people with the access to the Internet and the ability to use it. It brought more completed surveys, and thanks to that the results of the research could have been addressed to the population of students of economic majors in Lublin universities (Yin, 2011).

There were 379 respondents. The online form of a survey was filled by 231 people (61% of the respondents), and the rest – in a paper form – by 148 people (39%).

The survey consisted of 9 questions in which the respondents were asked to choose only one option in each question (Weidermann, von Eye, 2016). The questions concerned the desire of starting-up the business, evaluation of one's own creativity, problem-solving ability, ability to estimate, belief in one's own abilities, motivational factors in starting-up the business, inspiration in running the business, and barriers that make it difficult.

## 2. Characteristics of the research sample

The research goal was possible due to a survey covering the representative sample of the population of students in economic majors in Lublin universities. The choice of this sample was random and focused on different major courses. The Pro Progressio Foundation report, which in June 2017 conducted research about students of different economic majors in different parts of the country, shows that 7,726 people are studying in Lublin Voivodeship (*Kierunki ekonomiczne na polskich uczelniach*, 2017). That is the target group in the survey. What it means is that with the confidence level of  $1 - \alpha = 0.95$  (95%), and a maximum error of 5%, the minimal sample size should be 366 participants. In the research concerning the entrepreneurial attitude of the students of economic majors in Lublin universities related mainly to the desire and the initiative of starting-up and running one's own economic business, 379 students were surveyed – among all the respondents, students of a state university and a private university, as well as full- and part-time students, appeared.

As far as the representativeness of the group is concerned, it should be noticed that from a minimum sample size standpoint researched group can be defined as representative (Yates, Moore, Starnes, 2008). However, the representativeness of the sample depends also on the randomness of the selection of individuals to the sample. Technically, the method of data gathering was based on deliberately-random selection (Datallo, 2010), which means that the researched group was initially defined as students from Lublin universities, but each individual who took part in the research was random, not chosen initially. As a result, the only predetermined factor, as far as the research group was concerned, was the location and place of the study (Weidermann, von Eye, 2016).

Tables 2–5 show basic information about the researched sample – place of residence, age, type of secondary education, field of study.

Table 2. Research sample – place of residence

Place of residence	n	%
Village	126	33.2
City to 20 thousand inhabitants	112	29.6
City to 20–100 thousand inhabitants	98	25.9
City to 100–500 thousand inhabitants	39	10.3
City to 500 thousand inhabitants	4	1.1

Source: author's own elaboration.

Table 3. Research sample – age

Age	n	%
19–24	356	93.9
25–27	20	5.3
30 and older	3	0.8

Source: author's own elaboration.

Most of the respondents come from villages (126 people – 33.2%) and cities up to 20 thousand inhabitants (112 people – 29.6%). The least amount of the responders are from cities with more than 100 thousand inhabitants – overall 43 people (11.4%), where 39 people (10.3%) come from cities with 100–500 thousand inhabitants and 4 people (1.1%) from cities with more than 500 thousand inhabitants.

The dominant group was aged between 19 and 24. There were 356 respondents in this group, which is 93.9% of the people of the overall researched group. Only 3 people (less than 1%) were 30 or older.

Table 4. Research sample – type of secondary education

Type of secondary education	n	%
High school/technical school – economics	137	36.1
High school – general preparatory	163	43.0
High school – specialised	52	13.7
Other	27	7.1

Source: author's own elaboration.

Most of the respondents were the graduates of the general preparatory high school (43%) and the economics high school or technical school (36.1%). Together, both groups constituted 79.1% of the overall amount of the respondents. It is worth noting that the economic fields at Lublin universities are chosen mostly by the people whose high school is not directly related to the economic education.

Table 5. Research sample – majors

Major	n	%
Economics	67	17.7
Finance and Accounting	183	48.3
Management	129	34.0

Source: author's own elaboration.

Most of the students were studying finance and accounting (183 people – 48.3% of the overall amount of the respondents). 129 (34%) of management studies students and 67 (17.7%) of economics studies students were also surveyed.

### 3. Survey answers and research results

At the beginning of the survey, the respondents were asked questions about their self-esteem when it comes to the ability of starting-up one's own economic business. In the survey, five personality traits, appearing invariably for years, characterizing a business person were featured (Kotarbiński, 1982). They are as follows: creativity, problem-solving ability, ability to estimate, ability to show initiative, and belief in one's own abilities (Kwiatkowski, 2000; Sypniewska, 2016). The respondents were asked to self-evaluate themselves according to those personality traits. The answers to the self-evaluation questions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Self-evaluation of the respondents according to the personality traits of a business person

Question	Being a enterprising person while being (n = 379)									
Trait	creative		problem-solving		estimating		initiative		confident in own abilities	
Answers	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am not enterprising	37	9.8	19	5.0	114	30.1	87	23.0	181	47.8
I am enterprising	152	40.1	247	65.2	12	3.2	109	28.8	39	10.3
I am still learning to be enterprising	190	50.1	113	29.8	253	66.8	183	48.3	159	42.0

Source: author's own elaboration.

Among personality traits nurturing starting-up and running the economic business, the students of Lublin universities of economic majors of study evaluate themselves as being able to solve problems – 65.2% of the respondents clearly marked themselves as enterprising in this aspect, while 5% marked themselves as not enterprising. On the other hand, the trait that is the lowest on the list is the belief in their own abilities. 47.8% of them lack this trait, 42% are still learning, and only 10.3% showed the belief. In the case of the rest of the traits, 40.1% were creative, 28.8% were able to show initiative, and 3.2% were able to estimate. The aspect on which the respondents are still working is the ability to estimate, which is essential in the variable economic conditions.

In the further part of the research, the respondents were asked to indicate motivating and inspiring factors, and the barriers making economic business difficult. The indications of the respondents are shown in Tables 7–9. The respondents were able to mark up to 3 answers out of all the possible answers.

Table 7. Motivating factors to starting-up one's own business

Answer	n	%
Greater financial benefits	278	73.4
Self-employment	41	10.8
Own interests	85	22.4
Flexible working hours	45	11.9
Own company	148	39.1
Better use of experience and knowledge	13	3.4
Being afraid of not finding a suiting job	8	2.1
Taking the risk	163	43.0
Family traditions	55	14.5
Will to enlarge the capital	67	17.7
Other	3	0.8

Source: author's own elaboration.

Among the motivating factors to starting-up one's own economic business, the vast majority of the responders (73.4%) show the desire of greater financial benefits. Fewer people (43%) marked taking the risk as a motivating factor in starting-up the business. The third most frequently chosen factor was having an idea to start-up one's own company (39.1%).

The least frequently chosen factor was the fear of not finding a suitable job (2.1%) and the desire to better use the experience and knowledge (3.4%).

Table 8. Inspirations of running one's own business

Answer	n	%
Analysis of market needs	288	76.0
Own interests	119	31.4
Own knowledge and skills	14	3.7
Market success of other ventures	2	0.5
Experience	5	1.3
Other advice	33	8.7
Family tradition	46	12.1
Other	9	2.4

Source: author's own elaboration.

As for the inspiration to running one's own business, the respondents mainly indicated the analysis of market needs (76%), which is clearly connected to their studies, where students learn about the market and gain skills to its analysis. The second more rarely chosen were own interests (31.4%). It means that a large part of the respondents bind their career with their interests, which changes the previous mindset about the career for only financial reasons. The respondents show a will to develop their passions and to use them effectively in their career.

Table 9. Barriers making running own business difficult

Answer	n	%
Lacking the financial means to start-up and run one's own business	307	81.0
Extended bureaucracy	323	85.2
High rental prices of premises	64	16.9
Frequently changing legislations	296	78.1
Studies program does not fit the requirements of the economy	303	79.9
Difficulties with getting information about the possibilities of obtaining financial support	33	8.7
Difficulties with specifying the area of business	18	4.7
Not being able to use consultancy services, participating in specialist trainings, industry congresses	7	1.8
Lack of access to legal, accounting, and administrative services	12	3.2
Other	2	0.5

Source: author's own elaboration.



The rarest factors were the market success of other ventures (0.5%) and experience (1.3%). It shows that nowadays, students do not take entrepreneurial initiatives, which in effect transfers into small experience of functioning on the market.

Among the barriers making running the economic business difficult in Poland, the respondents indicate four main areas – extended bureaucracy (85.2%), lack of financial means (81%), poor syllabus not fitting the requirements of modern economy (79.9%), and instability of the law (78.1%). The respondents' answers to the previous questions do not indicate considerable economic experience, however, the problems related to running the business are indicated clearly and on-point.

Table 10. The desire to starting-up one's own business (n = 379)

Answer	n	%
No and I am not planning to	213	56.2
Not now, maybe in the future	5	1.3
Yes, but I do not have a specific idea	42	11.1
Yes, I have a specific idea, but I do not have enough knowledge to make it work	76	20.1
Yes, I have a business plan, but I am lacking financial means	30	7.9
I have my own economic business	13	3.4

Source: author's own elaboration.

The last question considered the desire of starting-up the economic business. More than half of the respondents (56.2%) answered that they did not plan on starting-up their own business. On the other hand, among the researched group, 13 people (3.4%) already have their own economic business. There was also a group of people (20.1%) who have an idea for a business, but are lacking knowledge to make it work.

The important group is the one with a business plan but without the financial means (7.9%). This answer is significant in the context of the previous question, in which a big group of the respondents pointed to the problem of the lack of financial means as a barrier making starting-up the economic business difficult. When it comes to the group with a business plan but lacking the financial means, the problem is real and represents a lost value for the whole economy, which could greatly benefit if those people were able to make their business ideas come true and be effective.

## **Conclusions**

The surveyed students of Lublin universities of economic majors evaluated themselves as holders of predestinating features to starting-up their economic business. However, it does not mean that they show the desire to run it. This phenomenon should be evaluated negatively paying special attention to the entrepreneurial attitude and the level of entrepreneurship among these people. It should be noticed that the following conclusions are especially true for the Lublin universities students because of deliberately-random research group, in which those students were the main and primary focus. Moreover, the character of the research was opinion-based, thus the perception of reality does not have to coincide with this reality in certain points, which appeared also in other research concerning the similar topics (Bhandari, 2006; Adekiya, 2016).

The most important motivating factors when it comes to the entrepreneurship among the students of Lublin universities of economic majors is the desire of greater financial benefits than those arising from being a full-time employee (73.4%), a high tendency to taking risk (43%), and having a specific idea for one's own business (39.1%). The main inspiration to starting-up one's own business is the analysis of market needs. What it means is that studying economic studies inclines to the market surveillance and the analysis of its needs in order to fulfill the gap. A little bit less important inspiration to starting-up the business is the ability to follow one's interests and passions, which at the same time can become the source of income.

The students of Lublin universities of economic majors showed four barriers in starting-up and running one's own economic business – extended bureaucracy, the lack of financial means, a poor syllabus not fitting the requirements of modern economy, and the instability of the law.

It needs to be highlighted that despite studying economic studies, the students do not feel as if they are gaining practical knowledge which they could use in the future. The legal swirling and the extended bureaucracy effectively deter young people from trying to take the economic initiative, which again should be negatively evaluated from the point of view of the further developing national economy.

The problem of the barriers in running the economic business from the point of view of a young person appears to be the most crucial in the research. The important problems in Poland are the extended bureaucracy and the shifting law. The political and legal instability and the excessive bureaucracy effectively discourage from running one's own economic business. It is also a huge obstacle for the people who are already running it. Any changes in this area are

mostly beyond the decisions of the individual entrepreneurs, so while running the economic business one should take these obstacles into account and efficiently overcome them.

The universities which run economic studies should pay attention to the students' expectations. The lack of practical elements, which are necessary in the current economic realities, is unequivocally indicated. Students entering the job market, regardless of whether they want to start-up their own economic business or work full-time, need specific skills and knowledge which are essential to function properly in nowadays economic realities.

Another problem indicated by the responders is the one concerning the financial means. A lot of students are not aware of the possibility of gaining external financing, which effectively limits their possibilities of starting-up the business. In the case of some of the responders (7.9%), this problem stopped them from starting-up and possibly running the economic business. It should be evaluated particularly negatively because of the continuous waste of potential of the human capital in Polish economy.

Particular attention should be given to the young people wanting to start-up their own economic business. Therefore, the expectations of future entrepreneurs should be carefully observed, especially in terms of the legal and economic principles in which they function and which grant them access to the easier realization of their ideas for a business. They also promote the entrepreneurial attitude among young people and various sources of funding for new businesses. This in turn can result in the higher percentage of people interested in starting up and successfully running their own economic business.

As mentioned at the beginning of the concluding part of the paper, the opinion-based research is not hard evidence on the reality, but more of a perception of it. It does not describe the only way of perceiving problems by the society as a whole, but as a sum of certain people sharing similar characteristics. Thus, the results of the research depict the image of entrepreneurship level and the attitude of young people in the aspect of starting-up and running business, which may be used in future research as a comparative base to further explore the topic of the entrepreneurship among students, and contribute to the overall perspective and perception of the problem (Wach, Wojciechowski, 2016; Sołek-Borowska, Laskowska-Chudy, 2017).

---

## References

---

- Adekiya, A.A. (2016). Entrepreneurship intention among students. The antecedent role of culture and entrepreneurship training and development. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 2 (14), 116–132.
- Amway Global Entrepreneurship Report (2016). Retrieved from: [news.amway.hu/files/2016/12/AGER\\_Global\\_Master\\_PPT.pdf](http://news.amway.hu/files/2016/12/AGER_Global_Master_PPT.pdf) (29.10.2017).
- Bhandari, N.C. (2006). Intention of Entrepreneurship among Students in India. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 2 (15) 169–179.
- Datallo, P. (2010). *Strategies to Approximate Random Sampling and Assignment*. Oxford University Press.
- Kierunki ekonomiczne na polskich uczelniach. Raport Pro Progressio, Maj 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.proprogressio.pl/pl/fundacja/badania-i-raporty.html?t=33;cc5d87bd8150617a39198dbb84447439;pl> (29.10.2017).
- Kotarbiński, T. (1982). *Traktat o dobrej robocie*. Wrocław: Ossolineum.
- Krok, E. (2015). *Budowa kwestionariusza ankietowego a wyniki badań*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Kwiatkowski, S. (2000). *Przedsiębiorczość intelektualna*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Pasternak-Malicka, M. (2014). Aktywność zawodowa młodych osób na rynku pracy i ich skłonność do podejmowania nieformalnego zatrudnienia. *Ekonomia i Zarządzanie*, 3 (6).
- Piecuch, T. (2013). *Przedsiębiorczość. Podstawy teoretyczne*. Warszawa: C.H. Beck.
- Potocki, A. (2000). *Współczesne tendencje w zarządzaniu – teoria i praktyka*. Chrzanów: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Przedsiębiorczości i Marketingu w Chrzanowie.
- Rękas, M. (2015). *Sytuacja ludzi młodych na rynku pracy w Polsce i innych krajach Unii Europejskiej w latach 2008–2013*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach.
- Solek-Borowska, C., Laskowska-Chudy, K. (2017). Exploring entrepreneurial attitudes of students in Poland: An interregional comparison. *Journal of Economics & Management*, 30, 141–162.
- Sypniewska, B.A. (2016). *Cechy i postawy przedsiębiorcze szansą własnej działalności gospodarczej*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu.
- Wach, K., Wojciechowski, L. (2016). Entrepreneurial Intentions of Students in Poland in the View of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, Economics of Higher Education. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 4, 83–94.

- Weidermann, W., von Eye A. (2016). *Statistics and Casuality. Methods for Applied Empirical Research*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Weiss, E. (2015). Przedsiębiorstwa spin-off/spin-out jako forma przedsiębiorczości akademickiej. *Przegląd Organizacji*, 8.
- Yates, D.S., Moore, D.S., Starnes D.S. (2008). *The Practice of Statistics*. 3rd Ed. Freeman.
- Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.